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THE Kadota Fig

PART I

MARKETING STANDPOINT



PUBLISHED BY

THE BECKWITH FIG GARDENS CO.

GROWERS :: PRESERVERS :: SHIPPERS

of KADOTA Figs

REEDLEY, CALIFORNIA

MARKETING STANDPOINT

Another year has passed, leaving the good reputation of the Kadota Fig more firmly established than ever as the most profitable fig for the grower to raise. The general market has determined this by its increasing demand for the preserved product. The canners and preservers know this, the buyers for the consuming trade know it, but only a few growers seem to be aware of it.

What a grower shall plant is generally decided upon on the advice of the growers that live around him instead of his letting the market demand for an article be the determining factor. His next door neighbor may be an authority on fruit growing, but the buyers for the restaurant, cafeteria, hotel, dining car and retail grocery trade, are the authorities to look to in considering the possible sale for a new product. Too often this information is out of the reach of the man who wants it. In the case of the Kadota, however, preserving companies all over the state can tell him of the increasing demand for this variety of fig and our own experience in supplying the trade is available to any interested party.

It is just four years since our preserved Kadota Fig made its entree into the high class markets. Today it is a standard dish in the best hotels, from the Palace in San Francisco to the Waldorf-Astoria of New York, and the Copley-Plaza of Boston. It is being served on the dining cars of six of our largest railroad systems and is sold by the fancy grocery trade in most of our larger cities; the only limitation so far being the small quantity available.

Of much greater importance, however, is the fact that it has also become a staple product in some popular priced eating houses which have been able to secure it packed in large tins. The quantities consumed by them are astonishing in view of its being a new article to the average person. Less than a score of such places have taken our entire output in this style of package. One place, the Compton Dairy Lunch, at 10 Kearny street, San Francisco, has ordered from us since September 400 cases of 10-pound tins, a net weight of 20,000 pounds of preserved Kadota Figs. It is being served at the same price as other canned fruits, and the managers of all these places report it as selling even faster than they expected. Quite naturally, it has entirely displaced the stewed dried fig on their menus.

At this rate one can easily figure that it would take thousands of acres of Kadota Figs to supply all the eating houses of the United States, to say nothing of the rest of the consuming trade. It is up to the grower only, to become conscious of the opportunity this presents.

It is not our purpose to discourage the growers of dried figs, but the following will indicate to the grower the attitude of the eastern market authorities. We quote from a letter received last week from D. E. Winter, manager of the fancy grocery department of Sprague-Warner and Company of Chicago, one of the three largest wholesale grocery houses in the country.

"Recently, when Mr. Beckwith was in Chicago, we discussed the possi-

bilities of the California fig, and it is my opinion that there will be a greater future in the raising of California figs suitable for preserving fresh than raising the fig that is sold on the market as dried figs.

"Seemingly the California figs cannot compete with the Smyrna figs, and because of the great demand for preserved figs it would seem to me that it would be wise for the fig growers to develop that species of figs that can be used best for preserving."

Of course, we Californians believe that our dried figs will finally win out against the imported article, but it will be an uphill fight, and further plantings for dried figs and an increased production will only serve to make it more difficult.

The grower of Kadotas has no foreign competition with which to contend. As to competition at home, figs have been preserved in Texas for the past thirty years, but the growing conditions are against them there and they have only served to pave the way for our Kadota product.

FRESH SHIPMENTS

The fresh Kadota made its first appearance in the Eastern markets five years ago. During that year W. Sam Clark of Sultana shipped the entire crop from his three year old trees East in ordinary refrigerator cars. Its superior shipping qualities were not only demonstrated, but it netted Mr. Clark \$73 an acre. This gave the Kadota its first commercial standing. Now its use in preserving has overshadowed the fresh shipments in importance, but each year we make some fresh shipments to keep up the interest in it. We have made over 50 Eastern shipments in all, each one in a regular refrigerator car with grapes in the ends of the car and figs in the brace. In 1917 our net receipts were 15c a pound; in 1918, 9c; in 1919, 26c; in 1920, 8c. The two years showing the lowest receipt included a few shipments which were over thirty days on the road. These spoiled and the red ink brought down the total. Our best returns have been from the New York and Boston markets, and we have sold successfully in Montreal, Canada. This fresh shipping situation has been studied by the Phalanx Fruit Company of Los Angeles and large distributors of Philadelphia, with the result that they have large plantings of Kadotas for the purpose of supplying their trade with fresh figs.

DRIED KADOTAS

Lest we forget the man who is interested in the dried article, we will give him the results of our experience in this line. The statement is frequently made that the Kadota does not make a good dried fig. It would be of little consequence if this were so since the preserving and canning is the big end. But the idea is erroneous. So few Kadotas have been dried that the packers have not thought it worth while to give them any special attention or to separate them from others to be sold as Kadotas.

The few we have dried have been sold readily at very near the prices of Calimyrnas. The Kadota can be put through a simple process of sweating which we have found successful in taking the toughness out of the skin, making them almost translucent and of a unique amber color which puts them quite in a class by themselves. Then, too, there are no splits, sours or smuts, hence, practically no culls. They dry away only $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 and since production is about twice that of the Calimyrna, the product could be sold at half the price of other figs and still return as much to the grower. In other words, if the Kadota should have to enter the dried fig market, it is altogether likely that it would not only hold its own but come out ahead of the game.

In conclusion, we may consider the drying and fresh shipping as purely incidental, but let us remember that the sale for the canned and preserved products made from the fresh Kadota fig is now thoroughly established. It has been made a staple product with part of the consuming trade, and bids fair to have as large a consumption in time, as the canned peach, apricot and stewed prune. Let us think, then, of this as an absolutely new California industry with no competition, and all the great countries of the earth for a market.